

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Hearing Date: April 15, 2021 8:00 AM

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COMMENTS FOR: HB 2602

Michael Williams

retired

Georgetown, TX

Bills I Support

HB 2602 - Authorizes flexible hours of service for election watchers.

HB 3970 - Authorizes election watchers to monitor all mail in ballot scanning and counting activities.

HB 3341 - Authorizes a pilot program for video recording of ballot counting.

HB 3303 - Prohibits the creation, altering, or suspension of voting standards, practices, or procedures by election officials.
ABOUT TIME!!!

HB 3999 - Authorizes alternate judges to have same duties and responsibilities as presiding judges. Repeals the statute that permits a presiding judge to demote an alternate judge to a clerk under the presiding judge's control.

Bill I Strongly Oppose

HB 2859 - Allows the Texas Secretary of State to solicit and accept "gifts, donations and grants from any private source" to set up and manage a an internet database of election information.

Dennis Botkin

John Birch

Richardson, TX

HB 2602 I am asking you to supplort the bill that authorizes flexible hours of service for election watchers.

Kimberly Bridges Young

Self

Crp Christi, TX

Vote Yes!

Verlinda Woellhof, Ms

self

FREDERICKSBURG, TX

I support HB 6 Texas Elections to provide confidence in our election process. If fraud prevails, my vote is stolen or canceled by a

bogus vote. Texas can do better to protect voter integrity. I support the following: HB 3970 HB 2602 HB 3341 HB 3303 and HB 3900.

I oppose HB 2859 . Without confidence in our voting integrity, we lose confidence in our political system and can lose our country and our freedoms. Law and Order is based upon trust in following our laws.

Craig Licciardi

Smith County GOP / self

Flint, TX

I recommend clarifying the language that was struck out in HB2602, pertaining to the use of cellular devices. If a poll watcher sees something unprofessional, or more importantly, illegal, happening, they should be able to exit the immediate voting area, make a call to report the illegal actions, and then return to their duties. By striking that language, if I understand correctly, an election judge could then "interpret" this as permission to bar them from resuming their poll watching if they "leave" to make a phone call. Perhaps I am misunderstanding the legislation. If so, my apologies. I am in favor of allowing poll watchers MORE latitude to perform their duties. I am reminded of two relevant examples - 1 in Houston / Harris county, and 1 in Travis county. In Houston, an off-duty police officer was a poll watcher. He saw stacks of ID cards on a table, and they were being used for random people coming by in vehicles, some with multiple occupants. This is highly irregular and should not have been allowed. If I remember correctly, he was adversely affected due to reporting this. In Travis County, Jennifer Fleck was duly authorized to be a central count watcher, along with multiple other Republican watchers. They were all excluded from being allowed into the room where counting was occurring. This is unconscionable, it's a class A misdemeanor under existing law, yet NO ONE was punished except for Jennifer, who spent a night in jail for "trespassing" even though she was authorized to be there, and the central count workers were the CRIMINALS who were abrogating her rights and violating existing election code.

Poll watchers, whether at polling locations or central count, need to be allowed to perform their functions and HB 2602 seems like it's trying to get there but the language needs to be tweaked to specifically state that. Thanks!

Monica Carson

self

Bastrop, TX

Please support this bill that authorizes flexible hours of service for elections workers.

Beth Richardson

Self tutor

Buda, TX

Please support this bill and pass it along quickly,

Sandra Stokes

Self Retired

Smithville, TX

As an election judge or clerk, I find the flexible hours of service would really help in finding workers for the elections. Many times individuals have conflicts arising from other obligations or family needs the flexible hours would give them the ability to work at the election.

JANIS REINKEN, ATTORNEY

SELF / ATTORNEY

AUSTIN, TX

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS, HB 2602, April 15, 2021

I oppose HB 2602 (Paul) which seeks to allow poll watchers to just come and go from a polling place at will while voting is taking place on Election Day. That means the Election Judge must devote time and attention to the coming and going of poll watchers in order to be aware of who is in the polling place other than the voters, workers, technicians and other authorized persons. This at-will behavior is disruptive and negates the purpose of the watcher bringing their certificate of authorization and checking in with the Election Judge upon arrival. It distracts the Election Judge and workers from devoting their primary time and attention to the needs of the voters and could impair the election workers' ability to attend to the various duties and reporting responsibilities that must be handled properly and timely, when they need to be done. HB 2602 could provide an errant poll watcher with an opportunity to go outside the polling place and bring something into the polling place that they are not authorized to bring inside, like election campaign materials.

Also, the current wording in Paragraph (b) needs to stay in the law because it does give the poll watcher the opportunity to step out briefly and use their cell phone if they need to, rather than use the cell phone or mobile device inside the polling place. Since voters are not allowed to use their cell phones and mobile devices in the voting site, it would be disruptive to allow poll watchers to use their mobile devices, potentially upsetting and confusing the voters. There is no need to strike the current provision (b). There is no justification for amending Section 33.052 of the Election Code as HB 2602 seeks to do. On balance, the harm outweighs the imagined benefits of these changes.

JoAnn Fleming, Executive Director

Grassroots America - We the People PAC

Flint, TX

JoAnn Fleming, Executive Director, Grassroots America - We the People PAC, speaking for the organization:

Grassroots America supports HB 2602 by Paul.

We support strongly support flexible hours of service for election watchers.

We urge the House Public Affairs Committee to pass this bill out of committee.
